THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) The Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, an autonomous organization under this department is engaged in research in Homoeopathy. National Institute of Homoeopathy at Calcutta is also engaged in Post-Graduate teaching and research. Extra-Mural research projects are also being financed for research in Homoeopathy. A Medicinal Plants Board has been set up to augment availability of authentic medicinal plants for manufacture of drugs. No specific allocation of funds has been made for this activity alone. There are about 800 medicines of Homoeopathy in use in India.

Report of fresh cases of plague

4821. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that three fresh cases with symptoms similar to those plague have again been reported from Chandigarh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a team of experts from the Centre was deputed to investigate these cases;

(c) if so, what are their findings; and

(d) the corrective measures adopted to bring the situation under control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Subsequent to the plague outbreak in Himachal Pradesh in the first week of February, 2002 three suspected cases with plague like symptoms were reported from Chandigarh and its adjoining areas. After 14th March, 2002 no fresh case has been reported.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. On receiving report on these cases with plague like symptoms from Chandigarh, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare deputed a team of experts consisting of an epidemiologist and a microbiologist from National Institute of Communicable Diseases on 22nd February for conducting investigations. The NICD further strengthened its team at Chandigarh by sending 4 more experts to monitor the infection control measures in the areas of high risk.

Laboratory investigations of the clinical samples from these patients did not show suspicious bacterial growth. However, as a measure of abundant

caution the various contacts of these three patients at different hospitals and their family settings were administered prophylactic treatment and were isolated from general population. Public health advisories were issued to Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh regarding undiagnosed fever and respiratory ailment.

Diseases due to shortage of clean water

†4822. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cause of 80 per cent diseases in the country is shortage of clean water;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to provide clean water to the public;

(c) whether Government would also issue some guidelines to States in this regard;

(d) if so, by when;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken to educate the people in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (f) Yes, Sir. Disease burden to water-borne diseases is enormous. The Government of India has taken up various initiatives for providing potable water to people living in rural and urban areas of the country and supports State Governments/State Water Supply Agencies/ Rural and Urban Local Bodies by way of providing technical guidelines for planning, designing, execution and operation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation projects.

The National Water Supply and Sanitation Programme also takes steps to supply clean water and also for proper disposal of human excreta. National

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.